



FY 2020-2021 HOTEL/MOTEL USE TAX TOURISM GRANT APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

The City of Woodstock Hotel/Motel use tourism tax was established to improve the quality of life for its residents, corporate citizens and visitors. Woodstock generates a 5% tax on overnight stays as outlined in Ordinance 05-O-95. These funds are invested back into the community through designated projects and events that will enhance visitor appeal and encourage overnight stays at Woodstock-based lodging businesses. **Please note: your event's successful attraction of out-of-area visitors, and promotion of their overnight stays in Woodstock, will ensure that funding can be made available for future grant awards!**

Criteria:

The City welcomes funding requests from state and federally recognized tax-exempt, **not-for-profit** organizations, and Woodstock community groups producing tourism-related events. Funding may be provided for the following activities:

- Promotion of Tourism;
- Tourist-Related Activities; and
- Tourism-Related Municipal Projects.

Award Structure:

Non-profit organizations located within Woodstock City limits may qualify for an award in one of the following categories:

- ❖ **Tier I Organizations** – The Opera House, Visit McHenry County (McCVB), Woodstock Chamber of Commerce, and Challenger Learning Center are established entities with a proven record of promoting tourism and/or overnight stays in the community for many years. As a result, these entities receive a baseline support on an annual basis without being required to submit annual renewal applications, unless requesting an increase in funding from the previous year. They are, however, required to submit an annual Final Report. In the event an increase in funding is requested, it will be limited to no more than a 20% increase and consideration will be entirely dependent upon available funds.
- ❖ **Tier II Organizations** – Additional organizations/events may apply for funding through the fund differential that remains after Tier I Organization funding has been met. Annual application and reporting requirements will be required for all Tier II organization/events. This requirement includes a streamlined application for Previously Funded Organizations (PFO). Organizations Not Previously Funded (NPFO) should complete the more detailed application provided. It should be noted that all requests, regardless of dollar amount or prior award status, must meet funding guidelines.

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Priorities:

The City of Woodstock is interested in funding organizations that demonstrate they have planned their projects with respect to the community's overall needs. When requesting funds, keep in mind priority is given to projects that:

- **Generate overnight stays in Woodstock hotels (the source for available grant funds);**
- Encourage support of Woodstock businesses, restaurants and attractions;
- Attract positive coverage in local, regional and national media;
- Provide the most accurate estimates possible for anticipated attendees and overnight stays;
- Represent proven successful programming with a multi-year commitment;
- Seek multiple sources of support rather than relying on the City of Woodstock as a single source;
- Yield benefits to the community for the resources invested;
- Promote cooperation among event organizers to reduce costs;
- Newly requesting Tier II Organizations will be considered on an equal basis with previous funding recipients and all will be held to the same evaluation standards.

Limitations:

Not every worthwhile project can be funded. Resources are directed to those areas where public support will have the greatest impact. In general, the following are not considered for funding:

- Individuals.
- Organizations that influence, promote, or support political candidates or political philosophies.
- Organizations whose primary purpose is to influence, promote, or attempt to initiate legislation.
- Funding for travel outside of Woodstock.
- For-profit ventures.
- Budget deficits incurred prior to application.
- Endowments.
- Fundraising. Funds must be used by the applicant for purposes promoting tourism, businesses, restaurants, attractions and overnight stays in Woodstock.
- Purchase of permanent equipment.
- Funds will not be used to support other municipal program dedications (i.e., Sister City Program).
- With the exception of Tier I Organizations, no entity will receive more than \$4,000 per year in funding.
- Funds will not be disbursed to any organization or program that already receives a waiver of normal municipal fees.
- Total annual funding, including both Tier I and II awards, will be limited to 98% of the tax revenue generated from the Hotel/Motel Tax during the previous year.
- Funds must be used by the applicant, and for the general purposes outlined above. Applicant may not provide funding received to a secondary organization.

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Review of Grant Requests:

Additional evaluation criteria include the following--

1) Organization

- Is the organization structured and managed to assure successful project completion?
- Are the resources of the organization consistent to fund its programs? What are the other sources of financial support?
- How does the organization's program/event benefit the Woodstock community?
- Can the organization's efforts be monitored conveniently?
- Has the organization applied for funding before? Was a Final Report submitted in a timely and complete manner? Were funds used as requested?

2) Project

- Why should the City be interested in this project?
- Does the project enhance the City's appeal?
- Is the project's approach designed to meet its objectives? Will funds from the City bring about desired results?
- Does the project have broad community involvement, as evidenced by cooperative planning, diversified funding and commitments of future support?
- Does the project duplicate or counteract other interests?

3) Application

- Was the Application typed, signed, legible and presented neatly?
- Were all questions sufficiently answered?
- Was the Application received manually or electronically by the designated date/time?
- Was the previous year's Final Report (if required) submitted by the designated date/time?

Contact:

- Should you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact **Grants/Communications Manager Terry Willcockson** at (815) 338-3400 x 11128 or e-mail twillcockson@woodstockil.gov .